

STAFFORD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Agenda Consideration

TOPIC: No Child Left Behind Consolidated
Application 2004-2005

ITEM NO: 9

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MEETING: August 6, 2004
ACTION DATE: August 24, 2004

ACTION REQUESTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT: That the School Board review and approve the 2004-2005 Consolidated Application for No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

KEY POINTS:

- The results of 2003-2004 school year indicate that 23 out of 24 schools were fully accredited. One school that did not meet the requirements of full accreditation did meet the federal requirement of adequate yearly progress. The results also indicated that 16 out of 24 schools met the requirement of adequate yearly progress.
- The drop out rate was reduced to 1.68%.
- SAT scores continued to be above the state and national averages.
- Focus areas of 2004-2005 are:
 - student achievement with a focus on the identified subgroups and vertical teaming articulation from the fifth grade and eight grade
 - prevention and intervention with a focus of early identification and targeted intervention for students K-3 in reading and mathematics who do not demonstrate appropriate states of development
 - professional development for administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals to ensure that all staff members are engaging in learning opportunities aligned with the Virginia Department of Education Highly Qualified Staff Development criteria
 - parent involvement programs providing connections with families by preparing parent resource materials and by hosting targeted school based activities for parents

SCHOOL BOARD GOAL: Goal #1 - Provide educational excellence through instruction that establishes high expectations for *all* students yet recognizes the unique needs of each learner.

FUNDING SOURCE: No Child Left Behind Consolidated Funds

AUTHORIZATION REFERENCE: Virginia Department of Education, Office of Program Administration and Accountability

In narrative format:

1. Describe the instructional program or program of services to be developed with the requested federal funds.
2. Include the targeted population(s). (Examples are: NCLB subgroups of students, homeless and migrant students, instructional and administrative staff, paraprofessionals, parents, etc.)
3. Discuss how the division's program will contribute to the attainment of the NCLB goals below.
 - All students will reach high standards, at a minimum, attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics by 2013-2014.
 - All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum, attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
 - By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
 - All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.
 - All students will graduate from high school.

Stafford County Schools, as a whole, is doing quite well based on a number of measures. Twenty-three out of twenty-four schools were fully accredited in 2003-2004. Student SAT scores are above both the state and national average. The current dropout rate for Stafford County is 1.68 %.

However, several areas of concern emerge upon analysis of the disaggregated data. A disproportionate number of African-American students and special education are achieving at lower levels than the Caucasian population. In Stafford County the number of students from the Hispanic and the LEP sub-groups are not great enough to be able to draw conclusions about the achievement of these groups, however, there is enough evidence to warrant paying close attention to these sub-groups each year. The LEP population in Stafford County is growing rapidly so preparation for assisting these students to be successful learners is warranted.

Our second greatest challenge is due to Stafford County's growth rate. As the second fastest growing county in Virginia we are continually adding new staff in our schools to serve the influx of new students and their parents. In addition to providing continuing educational services to our veteran staff we must provide additional educational opportunities to bring these new staff members to the same level of expertise of our veteran teachers. Furthermore, in 2003-2004 about 38 % of our teaching staff had less than seven years of experience.

To ground the development of our NCLB objectives we centered our thinking around three research based factors for school improvement: 1) a strongly focused instructional program, 2) an emphasis on student achievement, and 3) a culture of collaboration among teaching staff. Using these factors in conjunction with an analysis of our data we identified four objective target areas. The four objective target areas are Student Achievement, Prevention and Intervention Programs, Professional Development, and Parent Involvement.

There is much research to support that all students achieve at higher levels when high expectations are established for learning. In examining Stafford's classrooms we found that both the school based instructional leadership and the classroom instructional program are good indicators of student success. Funds will be allocated through this grant to further prepare all building level leaders and classroom teachers to examine instructional practices in light of student learning. Staff at the school sites will use this knowledge to design and implement instructional programs that foster critical thinking and problem solving skills in all students and to also increase the numbers of students enrolling in challenging course work across all subpopulations.

Over the last decade several compelling studies and reports have identified the strong connection between student achievement and the quality of teacher knowledge. Low-achieving students made significantly greater performance gains when assigned to effective teachers. Students perform better when they are able to learn from teachers who have a deep understanding of the content in conjunction with a sound knowledge of teaching methods for that content. Funds allocated through this grant will be used to support teachers in increasing their content knowledge, their content pedagogical knowledge, and their use of technology to enhance instruction.

C. PROGRAM OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

Stafford County provides extensive staff development opportunities for teachers, both prescriptive and self-selected. Tuition assistance and conference reimbursement are available for teachers. Paraprofessionals may also participate in many school division-sponsored staff development activities and are eligible for reimbursement for college classes pertinent to their instructional roles in the schools or leading to a teaching license. The Stafford County Public Schools offers contract classes with several colleges and universities, and has contractual agreements with others for reduced tuition in some programs. Stafford is implementing MyLearningPlan, a web-based service for tracking Professional Development activities for educators, which will be used to ensure that all staff members are engaging in learning opportunities aligned with VaDOE Highly Qualified Staff Development criteria.

We are taking a proactive approach to both academic and social problems through early identification and then providing targeted intervention. Funds from this grant will be allocated to support the development of processes to identify problems and then to implement interventions for K-3 students in reading and mathematics who do not demonstrate appropriate stages of development. LEP students will be monitored carefully to ensure that appropriate services are in place. ESL teachers will work closely with classroom teachers to provide interventions for these students. Social adjustment problems will be addressed through prevention programs, early intervention programs, and alternative learning situations supported through the this grant.

This grant will help to support staff members in developing the knowledge and skills needed to design and implement programs to ease the transition of students from elementary to middle school and middle to high school. The vertical articulation of subject matter content will be addressed as well as ways in which at risk rising sixth or ninth graders can be encultured into their new schools.

A significant body of research indicates that when parents participate in their children's education, the result is an increase in student achievement and an improvement of students' attitudes. Research also suggests a correlation between parent involvement and dropout rates. Parents in low socioeconomic homes are less likely to provide help for their children at home and these parents are sometimes unable to even provide a safe and secure home environment. These children will profit from the extra help that can be provided through specialist and paraprofessional instruction in these schools. In addition, these parents are reluctant to come to school functions and specialists can take extra steps to make connections with these families by preparing parent resource materials for students to take home and by hosting targeted school based activities for these parents.